

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND HOMELAND SECURITY



OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER  
ADVISORY BULLETIN 2007-3

**RE: 1. Availability of federal Emergency Management Program Grant (EMPG) funds.**  
**2. Summary of 2007 Session Legislative Changes Affecting Emergency Management.**

1. The Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) will be releasing EMPG grant guidance in the last week of July. Each Connecticut municipality is strongly encouraged to participate in the program. For the 2007 grant cycle, every participating town will receive a minimum of \$3000. The proportion of grant funding received by each town depends on the town's population. EMPG funds may be used for measures that enhance a town's emergency management capabilities, including the salary of the municipal emergency management director, operating expenses of the town emergency operations center, and pre-approved minor emergency operations center construction. Currently, the program requires a 50-50 match with town funds.
2. A number of Public Acts affecting emergency management issues were passed during the recently-concluded 2007 legislative session, and signed into law by the Governor. The following is a brief summary of the major new laws, or changes to current law<sup>1</sup> :
  - a. PUBLIC ACT No. 07-56: An Act Creating an Intrastate Mutual Aid System. Effective date—October 1, 2007.

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed summary, please consult the DEMHS web site at [www.ct.gov/demhs](http://www.ct.gov/demhs). Just click on "Public Information" on the left hand Navigation Bar.

Under this legislation--which is based on model national language and is the result of a collaboration of Connecticut representatives from police, fire, emergency medical services, emergency management, public works, and municipal government--an intrastate mutual aid system is created to provide for mutual assistance among participating political subdivisions with regard to any disaster that results in the declaration of a local civil preparedness emergency, or for mutual cooperation among participating subdivisions in conducting disaster-related exercises, testing or training activities. Effective October 1, 2007, all Connecticut political subdivisions are considered to be "participating." Any municipality that does not want to participate in the system can "opt out" by following the procedure outlined in Public Act No. 07-56. Participating jurisdictions may withhold or recall resources to the extent necessary to protect their own jurisdictions. The legislation does not affect any existing or future mutual aid agreements between towns. Because the legislation includes all municipalities within the state, one town may help another across the state. Also, this mutual aid system will allow for the deployment of a wide variety of municipal assets, including personnel and equipment, and is not limited to assets which are most commonly the subject of mutual aid agreements.

b. PUBLIC ACT No. 07-208: An Act Concerning Security Assessments and Assistance for Schools and Emergency Response Plans for Institutions of Higher Education.

Effective upon passage, Section 2 of this Act creates a school security competitive grant program to reimburse towns for expenses incurred on or after the effective date of the section, for certain security improvements at schools under their jurisdiction. The Act requires the state Commissioner of Education to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Commissioner of DEMHS to transfer \$10 million over two years to fund this grant program. DEMHS will administer the grant. It is currently anticipated that the grant application package will be available from DEMHS in mid to late September, 2007.

Section 3 of Public Act No. 07-208 requires each institution of higher education and private occupational school, as defined in Conn. Gen. Stat. §10a-22a, to have an emergency response plan. On or before October 1, 2007, and annually thereafter, each such institution or school must submit a copy of the plan to the Commissioners of Public Safety and Emergency Management and Homeland Security, and to local first responders. The

plans must be developed “in consultation with such local first responders.”

- c. PUBLIC ACT No. 07-173: An Act Concerning Civil Preparedness.  
Effective Date: October 1, 2007.

Section 1 amends the state-wide Emergency Management and Homeland Security Coordinating Council meeting requirement from at least monthly, to “at least quarterly.”

Section 3 annualizes the pre-existing requirement that, in order to be eligible for certain state or federal benefits, each town or city of the state have a current emergency plan of operations that has been approved by the Commissioner of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. Under this section, not later than January 1, 2008, and annually thereafter, each town or city must have a current plan approved by the DEMHS Commissioner. The plan must be submitted to the Commissioner after it has been approved by the local director of civil preparedness and the local chief executive. The plan may be submitted with a notice that the plan remains unchanged from the previous year’s version. See Connecticut General Statutes §28-7(a). This amendment formalizes a requirement set by the Governor.

Section 4 amends Connecticut General Statutes §28-12 to require that each person who is appointed to serve in a civil preparedness organization to take an annual oath before a local civil preparedness officer empowered by the Commissioner of DEMHS. Also, each local civil preparedness officer must provide to DEMHS a roster of sworn volunteer civil preparedness force members on or before the fifteenth of August each year, starting in 2008. These amendments are intended to strengthen the application of Title 28 compensation and immunity benefits to properly trained and authorized local volunteer civil preparedness force members.

Section 5 of Public Act No. 07-173 also amends Connecticut General Statutes §28-7(a) to require each town or city of the state to consider whether to provide for the nonmilitary evacuation of livestock and horses in its emergency plan of operations.

- d. PUBLIC ACT No. 07-11: An Act Concerning the Evacuation of Pets and Service Animals and Approval of the Local Emergency Plan of Operations. Effective date: October 1, 2007.

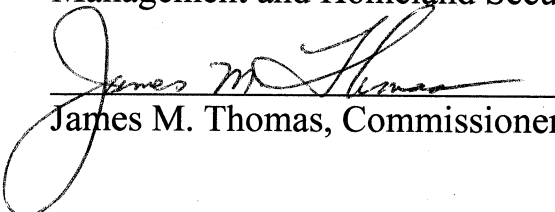
This law amends the definition of “civil preparedness” to include, among many other things already in the statute, the nonmilitary evacuation of “pets and service animals.” See Connecticut General Statutes §28-1(4).

The Public Act then amends Connecticut General Statutes §28-7(a) again, this time to require that a local emergency plan of operations shall not be approved by the Commissioner of DEMHS unless the Commissioner determines that the plan proposes strategies that address all the activities and measures of civil preparedness that are identified in §28-1(4).

e. PUBLIC ACT No. 07-202: An Act Concerning the Pay Scale of the State Police, the Prequalification Program Administered by the Department of Administrative Services and Certain Revisions to the Freedom of Information Act. Effective date: October 1, 2007.

Section 12 of Public Act No. 07-202 amends Connecticut General Statutes §1-210(b)(19) of the Freedom of Information Act to transfer from the Commissioner of the state Department of Public Works to the DEMHS Commissioner the requirement to determine whether reasonable grounds exist to withhold disclosure of the records of a municipal, district or regional agency because that disclosure may result in a safety risk.

Issued by Order of the Commissioner of the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security:

  
James M. Thomas, Commissioner

7/17/2007  
Date